

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for providing read-only access to network element configuration data, comprising:

receiving a request to access said configuration data for said network element; and

in response to said request,

initiating a communications session with said network element,

receiving said configuration data from said network element, and

transmitting said configuration data in a read-only format as a response to said request.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said request to access said configuration data comprises a target identification code for said network element.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said request further comprises a user login and password, and wherein an error message is provided in response to said request if said user login and password are not authorized to access said configuration data.

4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

retrieving previously stored configuration data associated with said network element from a database;

comparing said previously stored configuration data to said configuration data received from said network element;

determining whether said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are identical; and

in response to determining that said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are not identical, storing said configuration data received from said network element in said database.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said request is received at a World Wide Web site.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said World Wide Web site is only accessible via an intranet.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said network element comprises a network element located on an optical network.

8. A system for providing read-only access to network element configuration data, comprising:

a network element located on an optical network operative to store configuration data describing the current configuration state of the network element and further operative to provide said configuration data in response to requests for said data; and

a server computer communicatively coupled to said network element and operative to provide a World Wide Web site at which a request may be received to view said configuration data, to retrieve said configuration data from said network element in response to said request, and to provide said configuration data in a read-only format in response to said request.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein said server computer is further operative to receive a user login and password, to determine if said user login and password are authorized to access said configuration data, and to provide an error message in response to said request if said user login and password are not authorized to access said configuration data.

10. The system of Claim 9, further comprising a telemetry assignment system database having previously stored configuration data for said network element; and wherein said server computer is further operative to retrieve said

previously stored configuration data, to compare said previously stored configuration data to said configuration data received from said network element, to determine whether said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are identical, and, in response to determining that said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are not identical, to store said configuration data received from said network element in said telemetry assignment system database.

11. The system of Claim 10, wherein said World Wide Web site is accessible only via an intranet.

12. A computer-readable medium comprising computer executable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

initiate a communications session with a network element in response to a request to access configuration data for said network element;

receive said configuration data from said network element; and

transmit said configuration data in a read-only format as a response to said request.

13. The computer-readable medium of Claim 12, wherein said request to access said configuration data comprises a target identification code for said network element.

14. The computer-readable medium of Claim 13, wherein said request further comprises a user login and password, and wherein said computer executable instructions are further operative to cause the computer to generate an error message in response to said request if said user login and password are not authorized to access said configuration data.

15. The computer-readable medium of Claim 14, wherein said computer-readable instructions are further operative to cause the computer to:

retrieve previously stored configuration data associated with said network element from a database;

compare said previously stored configuration data to said configuration data received from said network element;

determine whether said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are identical; and

to store said configuration data received from said network element in said database in response to determining that said previously stored configuration data and said configuration data received from said network element are not identical.

16. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 1.

17. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 2.

18. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 3.

19. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 4.

20. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 5.